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AUTHOR Berthoumieux, Michel; Willemsma, Adalgard
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ABSTRACT

This regional dossier aims to provide concise, descriptive information and basic educational statistics about minority language education in a specific region of the European Union--the South of France. Details are provided about the features of the educational system, recent educational policies, divisions of responsibilities, main actors, legal arrangements, support structures, and qualitative information on a number of schools, teachers, pupils, and financial investments. This information is designed to serve the needs of policy makers, researchers, teachers, students, and journalists as they assess the developments in European minority language schooling. This information may also serve as a first orientation towards further research (additional readings are suggested and contact information provided). Specifically, information is provided on preschool, primary, secondary, vocational, higher, and adult education, as well as a review of educational research, summary statistics, and overall prospects for the use of the language under study. The subject of this dossier is Occitan. Occitan is a Romance language spoken in seven regions in the southern France--Provence-Cote d'Azur, Aquitaine, Auvergne, Dauphine, Limousin, Languedoc-Roussillon, and Midi-Pyrenees. Occitan has four main dialects, and its use has significantly waned in recent decades. (Contains 20 references.) (KFT)

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The Occitan language in education in France

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Mercator-Education
P.O. Box 54
8900 AB Ljouwert/Leeuwarden
The Netherlands

tel. +31-58-2131414
fax: +31-58-2131409

e-mail: mercator@fa.knaw.nl
website: http://www.fa.knaw.nl/uk/mercator/fa-merc.html

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This regional dossier was established by Michel Berthoumieux and Adalgard Willemsma in 1996. They were assisted by Mrs. S. Dupuy, Mr. P. Sarpoulet, Ms. M. Stenta, Ms. C. Remund, Mrs. S. Arneodo and Ms. A Cazes. Data reflect the situation in July 1996, unless stated otherwise.

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Foreword to the regional dossiers

background

For several years now, Mercator-Education has attempted to achieve one of its principal goals: to gather, store and distribute information on minority language education in European regions. Regional or minority languages are languages which differ from the official language of that State and which are traditionally used within a given territory of that State by nationals of that State forming a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population.[1] To date, Mercator-Education has been successful in establishing a computerized data bank containing bibliographic data, information about persons and organisations involved with minority language issues, and data collected during four inventory studies on pre-school education (Goot, Renkema & Stuijt, 1994), primary education (Sikma & Gorter, 1991), learning materials (Tjeerdsma & Sikma, 1994) and teacher training (Dekkers, 1995). In addition there is a need for documents stating in brief the most essential features of the educational system of regions with an autochthonous lesser used language. With the establishment of regional dossiers it is intended to meet this need.

aim

Regional dossiers aim at providing concise descriptive information and basic educational statistics about minority language education in a specific region of the European Community. This kind of information, such as features of the educational system, recent educational policies, division of responsibilities, main actors, legal arrangements, support structures, and also quantitative information on the number of schools, teachers, pupils and financial investments, can serve several purposes.

target group

Policy makers, researchers, teachers, students and journalists may use the information provided to assess developments in European minority language schooling. They can also use a regional dossier as a first orientation towards further research (further reading and addresses are included) or as a source of

ideas for improving educational provision in their own region.

link with EURYDICE

In order to link these regional descriptions with those of national educational systems, it was decided to follow the format used by EURYDICE, the European education information network in the European Union. EURYDICE provides information on the administration and structure of all levels of education in Member States of the European Union.[2] The information provided in the regional dossiers is focused on language use at the various levels of education.

contents

The remainder of this dossier consists firstly of an introduction to the region under study, followed by six sections each dealing with a specific level of the educational system. Sections eight to ten cover research, prospects and summary statistics. These brief descriptions contain factual information presented in a readily accessible way. For detailed information and political discussions about language use at the various levels of education, the reader is referred to other sources.

1 Introduction to this issue

language

Occitan, or the Oc language, is a Romance language. It is spoken in seven regions (Provence-Côte d'Azur, Aquitaine, Auvergne, Dauphiné, Limousin, Languedoc-Roussillon, and Midi-Pyrénées) in the South of France, which will be the focus of this document. This area is inhabited by 15 million people.[3] Occitan is subdivided into four main dialects: Languedocien, Provençal, Gascon, and Northern Occitan.

From the eleventh until the fourteenth centuries the Occitan language was a language of culture used by troubadours (minstrels). As from the sixteenth century Occitan was banned from official documents, but remained the main language of communication of the population until the beginning of this century. An intellectual elite continued to write Occitan.[4]

Nowadays, it is less and less spoken, particularly among young people.[5] In the last few years two surveys have been in the regions of Montpellier and Pau regarding the attitude of the public towards Occitan.[6] Of the total population in this area of France 55% do not know the language; 40 to 50% understand it; 25% can speak it; about 10% speak it daily or often; and 6% claim to be able to write Occitan.

educational system

In France school attendance is compulsory from 6 to 16, but children can be accepted in schools from the age of 2 years. The first three levels of education, nursery, primary and lower secondary are subdivided into five learning cycles. From the age of 2 to 5 children can start with the first learning cycle, followed by the basic learning cycle (5-8) and the consolidation cycle (8-11). Lower secondary education covers the observation (11-13) and the orientation cycles (13-15), followed by various streams in upper secondary education.

A basic principle of the educational system in France is that every young person must be given the opportunity to take up vocational training before he or she leaves the system.[7] During the period of compulsory education, the payment to parents of family allowances is subject to registration and regular school attendance of their children.

public and private

The compulsory nature of education is consistent with the principle of free education, both for public and private education institutions. First-level public schools are fully funded by the State and are not allowed to receive money from regional authorities; only the collèges are allowed this funding within the limits of 10% of their total budget.

The majority of the private schools[8] are denominational - mainly Catholic - and have signed a simple contract or a contract of association with the State. For institutions with a simple contract the State pays the salaries of teachers who are considered in law as private employees. The State also controls the conditions and contents of the education, as well as the training of teachers. Teachers at schools with a

contract of association are also paied by the State, but are considered in law as public employees (with the advantages linked to the Civil Service).

Finally, there are private schools which have not signed a contract with the State. At these schools the State exerts minimum control (hygiene, health, moral) and their pupils sit the national exams as free candidates. In the private sector, families must pay school fees which vary from school to school.

administration

There are four administrative levels in France: state, region, *département* and local community. At state level the Ministry of National Education has almost total control over educational matters, such as defining educational guidelines and curricula, the approval of the diplomas, and the recruitment, training and administration of staff. The State also issues regulations on questions of management and supervision with which the majority of private schools are also required to comply.

Through the decentralisation laws of 1982 and 1983, the so called Savary regulations, the French tradition of centralisation changed and the role of the regions, *départements* and municipalities increased somewhat. The regions are responsible for building and maintaining premises of upper secondary schools (*lycées*) and institutes for vocational training. *Départements* have the same responsibility for schools for lower secondary education (*collèges*), and local communities or town councils with regard to nursery and primary schools. This does not involve any activities concerning the contents of education. That remains with the state.

académie

A particular characteristic of the French educational system are the administrative units of education (*académies*). The 28 educational administrative units roughly correspond to the 22 regions of France. Each *académie* is headed by a director (*recteur*) who represents the Ministry of Education and who is responsible both for the management of primary and

secondary schools and for the enforcement of national regulations within the *académie*. In Occitania the eight *académies* are located in Aix-Marseille and Nice (Provence-Côte d'Azur), Bordeaux (Aquitaine), Clermont-Ferrand (Auvergne), Grenoble (Dauphiné), Limoges (Limousine), Montpellier (Languedoc-Roussillon), and Toulouse (Midi-Pyrénées).

official language

French, the language of the Republic, is the only official language in France; the other languages in France are designated 'regional languages', and the majority of their teaching is founded on the goodwill and dedication of parents and teachers.

regional languages and cultures

Since the Deixonne law of 1951, regional language and culture may be taught for 1 to 3 hours a week if the teacher is willing and able to do it. In 1966 a ministerial guideline provided for the creation of a Commission for Regional Languages and Cultures in each of the *académies* concerned. However, the implementation and execution of this directive has not been effected in most academies. These commissions applied themselves essentially to fixing the programme for regional language and culture at the *baccalauréat* exam, the end of the upper secondary education, and for setting up a list of voluntary teachers and examiners.

Regulations from 1982 and 1983 gave another impulse in structuring the teaching of regional languages and culture. A further step was taken in 1984 with the creation of a professional aptitude exam (E.A.P.) for Occitan.

It took until 1991 before the first certificate of professional aptitude for second grade teaching (CAPES) in Occitan was created. At the end of 1992 at the level of the *académies*, commissions for the teaching of Regional Languages and Cultures (CAELCR) were re-introduced.

In 1995, another memorandum took up this directive, adding to it the requirement to set up a Plan for the teaching of Regional Languages and Cultures.[9] At present (1996) the

commissions should be functioning in the *académies* of Grenoble, Montpellier, Nice and Toulouse.

Furthermore, plans have been developed in Clermont-Ferrand, Montpellier, Nice and Toulouse. It should be observed, however, that their functioning depends largely on funding for their activities. Normally there is no extra funding.

inspection

The supervision and inspection of the educational system is executed by general inspectors of national education and by general inspectors of administration. The first, for example, visit classrooms and mark teachers on their classroom performance. The latter are more concerned with issues such as the physical organisation and the operation of the schools. They also provide advice and make proposals to the Minister of National Education.

Under authority of the Recteur of an *académie*, regional and district pedagogical inspectors are charged with evaluating and marking teachers at secondary schools and primary schools, respectively. Since 1982, assistant deputies for regional languages and cultures have been appointed to *académie* inspectors. In 1996, the Ministry of National Education appointed for the first time ever general inspectors for Regional Languages and Culture to each *académie*. Deputies acting as regional inspectors for regional languages and cultures were also appointed.

support structure

There are several advisory bodies related to the level of education who give advice, make proposals and provide information to the Ministry of National Education about various educational topics. Support of Occitan in the educational system is provided by commissions for regional languages and cultures, such as the Regional Centre for Pedagogical Documentation in Toulouse, and by a range of private institutions, such as publishers and cultural organisations.[10]

calandretas

One of these cultural organisations is the association of *calandretas*, which is a network of Occitan-medium schools. They started in 1979, providing education for children aged 2 to 6 in Occitan only. Later on they also provided education at primary level. The educational practice of these schools is based on a pedagogical principle called immersion education, which means that young children are first educated through the medium of Occitan and after several years also through French. These classes, whose numbers and attendances are increasing, are in a period of transition.

The different *calandreta* schools can each individually seek to be linked with the Ministry of National Education. As a whole, the association has opted for the status of private education. The local associations which manage the schools were founded by parents but the State pays the salaries of primary school teachers on the basis of a quota per number of pupils, renegotiated every year since 1992.

2 Preschool education

target group

Preschool education is optional and available to children between the ages of 2 and 5. As a result of a long tradition of providing preschool in France, more than 99% of children aged 3 attend educational institutions at this level.

statistics

There are 16 *calandretas*, catering for about 650 pupils. Their number is increasing every year. Within the system of National Education, there are at the moment 14 bilingual nursery classes catering for about 365 children. Those classes were created in 1989 and their number is constantly increasing.

structure

Children attend lower, middle and upper sections, according to their age and level of development. The lower and middle sections form the first learning cycle, while the upper section, together with the first two years of primary education, form the basic learning cycle.

language use

The language used depends on the institution. At most play groups, nursery schools, and infant classes of state schools French is the medium of instruction. Some 5% of these state nursery school teachers make use of the legal possibility to spend 1 to 3 hours a week on regional language and culture. Depending on the ability and dedication of the teacher, activities vary from awareness games, songs, stories, or nursery-rhymes to specific language teaching.

bilingual schools

In nursery classes of bilingual public schools or of bilingual sections, the children have 15 hours of activities in French and 12 hours in the regional language.

Occitan playgroups

Occitan is used as the medium of education in Occitan playgroups, called *calandretas*. They are mainly based in towns where it is difficult to find any trace of Occitan in public life or in families. The child is immersed so that it can quickly understand the language, and then speak it effectively. Teachers are recruited on the basis of their motivation to teach and their knowledge of Occitan.

instruction material

Most instruction material in Occitan is prepared by the teachers, although some associations or private organisations are starting to develop and distribute educational materials as well.

3 Primary education

target group

Primary education lasts five years and caters for the 6 to 11 age group.

statistics

In the *académies* of Bordeaux, Montpellier, Nice and Toulouse, which make up half of the relevant area, about 2,500 teachers (0.5% of the total number of teachers) include Occitan language and culture in their lessons (up to a maximum of 3 hours a week). This teaching affects 49,000 pupils which is 0.3% of the total number of pupils. Furthermore there are 11 bilingual classes in public primary education catering for 280 pupils, and 10 *calandretas*

(Occitan medium) for 450 pupils. In the Occitan regions, private education represents some 11% of the total for primary schools (210,000 pupils).

legislation

In the directive of February 22, 1995 formulated by the Minister of National Education, the programmes of the primary school have been defined. These contain the knowledge and skills which children are expected to acquire in the course of each cycle.

language use

Since 1951 teachers and schools have had the legal possibility to spend a maximum of 3 hours a week on regional language and culture. Through observations by pedagogical counselors in charge of the teaching of Occitan (18, 12, 6 and 2 in the *académies* of Toulouse, Bordeaux, Montpellier, and Nice respectively), it became clear that even when 50% or more of the parents are positive towards teaching regional language and culture, few teachers are willing to teach it. There is a lot of unwillingness among teachers to abandon the principles in force in French education.

The directive of April 5, 1995, adds that the wishes of parents must be taken into account. This means that an inspector of an *académie* can appoint a teacher who is willing and able to teach Occitan language and culture in order to satisfy the wishes of the parents.

Occitan in education

Following the initiative of bilingual classes in public nursery schools, the teaching of Occitan is also beginning to develop in state primary schools. The official instructions of the Ministry of National Education encourage this development. Since 1985, in the Académie of Montpellier a project started, called *Projet pédagogique d'Occitan*, which aims at introducing Occitan in various disciplines such as theatre and excursions, thus creating sensitivity towards the language in some 12,000 pupils every year.

The degree to which Occitan is being introduced varies from school to school. It is supported by the Region and some of the *départements*.
Occitan-medium primary education is provided by *calandretas*.

instruction material

Since 1995, newly developed methods for teaching the Occitan language have been produced for primary level. A method intended for the first and second learning cycle (children from 4 to 8) is called *Aqui d'istorias*, and was developed by the A.D.OC. (Association for the development of Occitan) in the Lozère district. For children aged 8 to 11 (third learning cycle) a method called *Fai passar* is available. This method was established by A. Floutard (Pedag'oc collection).
Other instructional materials are educational magazines such as *Minot*, which first came out in Provence in 1990, and *Plumalhon* (an adaptation of the French magazine *Toboggan*). Finally, Serge Carles wrote a language course, called *Diga-me, diga-li* which was published some years ago.

4 Secondary education

structure

Secondary education consists of two levels, each again subdivided into various learning cycles.

statistics

In the Occitan area (omitting the *académie* of Limoges, for which statistics are not known) there are 1,350 public schools for lower secondary education catering for 706,760 pupils and 510 private schools serving 150,160 pupils. For the second cycle of secondary education there are 680 public schools for 507,670 pupils and 650 private schools for 135,600 pupils.

lower secondary education

The first level is for pupils aged 12 to 16 who spend four years (6th, 5th, 4th and 3rd forms or classes) in a school for lower secondary education (*collège*), which corresponds to the final years of compulsory education. In the last two years

(4th and 3rd class) pupils can choose between general or more technically oriented education.

upper secondary education

Upper secondary education is divided into two streams: the general and technical schools (*lycées*) and vocational schools (*lycées professionnels*). General and technical schools prepare pupils in 3 years (2nd, 1st and final classes) for a general or technical *baccalauréat* examination which gives them the opportunity to enter university. Pupils in vocational schools follow a two-year programme. Additional information on this latter type of school and other types of vocational education is provided in the next section.

Occitan in lower secondary education

Thirty percent of the schools for lower secondary education offer Occitan as an optional subject only, involving 7,000 children (*académies* of Bordeaux, Clermont-Ferrand, Montpellier, Nice and Toulouse). From the first year (6th class) there is the legal possibility to offer Occitan as an optional subject for a maximum of 3 hours a week. In some schools Occitan can be chosen as a second modern language in the third and fourth year (4th and 3rd class). An increasing number of schools intend to include Occitan in their educational programme, or to provide Occitan as second language as an optional course. As a result the number of pupils involved is also increasing.

bilingual schools

In 1995, two schools for lower secondary education began a bilingual education programme, which means that two subjects (language /literature, and history /geography) are taught through the medium of Occitan for 8 hours a week. For the moment this concerns about forty pupils.

Occitan in upper secondary education

Occitan is offered as an optional subject at 60% of the schools for upper secondary education (*lycées*) in the *académies* of Bordeaux, Montpellier, Nice and Toulouse, involving 3,200 pupils. A small number of schools offer the opportunity to study Occitan as a third modern language in the second class (1st year of the second cycle). In contrast to the development which can be noticed in the schools for lower secondary education, the number of pupils choosing

Occitan in these schools is decreasing. The notable increase which took place from the 1970's seems to have been restrained by the various reforms which have resulted in an increase in optional subjects and heavier emphasis on compulsory subjects, therefore reducing interest in other subjects, such as Occitan.

instruction material

Since the end of the sixties, the Institut d'Estudis Occitans (I.E.O.) has developed some text-books in order to support teachers in secondary education, particularly with regard to the preparation for the *baccalauréat* exam. A few examples are: the *Cahiers Pédagogiques* published by I.E.O; *Ieu coneissi un païs* by Michèle Stenta; *En Occitan dans le texte* by Yves Rouquette; *O disi en Occitan* by Claude Molinier, and *Parli Occitan* by Jean Rigouste. Various other educational materials have been published. *Lenga e Païs d'Oc*, a monthly periodical published by the Regional Centre of Pedagogical Documentation in Montpellier is a good example of these. The Departmental Centre for Pedagogical Documentation in Montpellier published a language course for the 6th and 5th grades, *Aital Parlam* (1985), which has enjoyed a good deal of success.
Furthermore, multimedia packages on literary themes have been produced with attractive layouts, such a a troubadour anthology and language games.

5 Vocational education

legislation

A characteristic of the French education system is the responsibility of the Minister of National Education to make sure that every young person (from the age of 16)is offered vocational training before leaving the education system. In 1993 this resulted in a law introducing regional plans for the development of vocational training.

structure

Preparation of young people for employment is being carried out by a broad variety of training institutes: initial training (school and apprenticeship), integration contracts and continuing vocational training.

vocational schools

Pupils in vocational schools follow a two-year programme leading to a vocational aptitude certificate (*certificat d'aptitude professionnelle* - CAP), or to a less specialized vocational studies certificate (*brevet d'études professionnelles* - BEP). After two additional years it is possible to get a vocational *baccalauréat*, which entitles holders to begin university studies.

apprenticeship

Young people between 16 and 25 years of age can follow a training programme under an employment contract, combining theoretical education in a centre with the acquisition of practical skills in a firm. Such an apprenticeship lasts from one to three years. Details on other types of training for this age group will not be covered here.

language use

Information about the use of Occitan in vocational education is not available.

6 Higher education

structure

Higher education in France can be divided into two broad sectors: universities (public) catering for the majority (69%) of students and providing general rather than professional education, and *Grandes Ecoles* (special state institutes) recruiting the best pupils from the general scientific sections of high school and focusing on engineering, business and administration.

statistics

In the Occitan area there are the traditional university towns Aix, Marseille, Bordeaux, Clermont-Ferrand, Grenoble, Limoges, Montpellier, and Toulouse. But the newer university towns of Nice and Pau should also be mentioned, as should the university colleges which are developing in smaller towns. The number of students vary between 5,000 to 120,000 (e.g. 70,000 for the universities of Bordeaux). Though no official statistics are available, we estimate that about 2,000 students choose Occitan as a subject in the universities.

universities

The general diploma of university studies (DEUG) in Occitan can be obtained in two years at the departments of Literary Studies at the universities of Bordeaux, Montpellier, Pau and Toulouse. A higher degree, called the *licence* (Bachelor of Arts) can be obtained in 3 years at the university of Montpellier. The *maîtrise* in Occitan (Master of Arts) can be obtained in Montpellier and Toulouse. Those who want to specialize further in Occitan can spend a preparatory year in research leading to an advanced studies certificate and then over three or four years to a doctorate.

study of Occitan abroad

Occitan is often provided in departments of literature, linguistics or Roman philology. Thus Medieval Occitan and sometimes Modern Occitan can be studied at a number of foreign universities, such as those in Vienna (Austria) Frankfurt (Germany), and even in Tokyo (Japan). In the same way Occitan is studied in Paris and Poitiers outside the area where Occitan is spoken today.

Occitan as a subject

Occitan as a subject is offered at several departments at universities but does not exist at the *Grandes Ecoles*. However, students can choose the regional language in the preparatory classes to the *Grandes Ecoles* (at a general or technical high school), which prepare them for a competitive entrance examination to one of the special state institutes. A few students who have chosen the regional language for their *baccalauréat* continue studying it, particularly for the Brevet of Higher Technician.

teacher training

Since 1992, the training of teachers has been provided by university teacher training institutes (IUFM *Institut universitaire de formation des maîtres*) which are linked to universities and possess branches in the districts. The IUFM are higher education institutions which have replaced the previous training structures for teachers in the first and second levels.

- first level

After three years of post-secondary education leading to a diploma, candidates wishing to become a nursery or primary school teacher can attend an IUFM. The training for first

level (preschool and primary) teachers consists of two years of which the first year is optional. At the end of the first year of theoretical and practical training candidates take a competitive recruitment examination which allows them to enter the second year. At the end of the second year they are appointed to positions as school teachers.

Only the IUFMs of Montpellier, Nice and Toulouse offer a general course of Occitan in their first year to 120 students studying to be primary school teachers. In the second year, Occitan as a subject (40 hours a year) is offered at the IUFMs of Clermont-Ferrand, Limoges, Nice and Toulouse. In Montpellier this teaching is done on a basis of 15 hours per week. All teachers have a credit of 36 weeks in-service teacher training. In several districts training courses are organised for first level teachers under the programme of the 'District Plan for the Extended Training of Teachers' (PDFCM).

- secondary level

Persons who wish to teach at secondary level must have acquired at least a university degree obtained after a 3-year course *(licence)* or another diploma reflecting this level. They then enter IUFM. At the end of the first year candidates sit a national competitive examination leading to a certificate of aptitude for teaching at secondary level (CAPES), organized by subject area and school type.

Since 1991 the following certificates for Occitan in combination with another subject have been created: Occitan-French, Occitan-History, Occitan-English, Occitan-Spanish, Occitan-Italian. This training is only offered in Montpellier and Toulouse. About one hundred Occitan teachers have been recruited since 1992.

The highest level for secondary school teachers, ***agrégation***, is not available for teachers teaching Occitan as a subject. For this level candidates should have completed 4 years of study and hold a Master's degree.
Like first level teachers, secondary teachers also have 36 weeks credit for in-service teacher training. In some

académies training courses for these teachers are organised by the Academic Mission for the Training of Teachers (MAFPEN).

calandretas

In 1994 the Association of Calandretas established a Centre for the Training of Teachers in Capestang. In 1994 and 1995 they trained 18 primary school teachers for *calandretas*. They are recognized by the Minister for National Education and for their salaries they are put on the same footing as private primary school teachers.

7 Adult education

two types

Adult education is mainly based on private initiative, sometimes integrated into municipal programmes. Language courses for adults are numerous in the Occitan area and take various forms. A major distinction can be made between courses for Occitan-speakers and for others. For those in the first category the courses are an opportunity to practise the language and to be introduced to Occitan literature, while the non-Occitan speaking persons attend courses in order to learn the language.

calandretas

The Association of the Calandretas has also created special courses for parents of pupils of the *calandretas* who want to support their children in their studies.

institutes

For more than 20 years *l'Escola Occitana d'Estiu* (EOE) of Picapol (*département* of Lot-et-Garonne) has provided courses for people who want to improve their knowledge of Occitan at all levels. Every year 150 to 200 persons attend the school. All year round they offer courses for adults and intensive courses in Occitan. Other EOE's have been created on the same model and four or five of them attract about a hundred persons every summer.

regional centres

The *Centres Régionaux pour l'Etude de l'Occitan* (Regional Centres for Occitan Studies (C.R.E.O)) are now part of an academic society and in this framework teachers, and

sometimes also parents, offer training courses every year. For a few years two of them have also organised Occitan summer-camps, and have trained instructors.

Occitan institute

The *Institut d'Estudis Occitans* (I.E.O.) also organises every year an Occitan Summer University (this year (1996) in Nîmes) where French and foreign specialists study special themes linked to the Occitan language and culture.

correspondence course

The oldest correspondence course in Occitan should also be mentioned: the *Collège d'Occitanie*. The main centre is in the Catholic Institute in Toulouse, which has been providing education for students all over the world for more than 50 years.

8 Educational research

development

As measures favouring the teaching of regional languages have been introduced only recently, it has not yet been possible to set up structured and coordinated research on this topic.

Since 1982, more and more posts for pedagogic counselors have been created by official authorities. The number of primary school teachers with training tasks has slowly increased, as well as the number of primary school teachers entrusted with guidance tasks in the districts to give pedagogical support to voluntary teachers in schools.

general inspector

In 1996, the first General Inspector for regional languages was appointed. He appointed *chargés de mission* acting as Regional Pedagogical Inspectors, who were already working in the *académies* of Bordeaux, Montpellier, Aix-Marseille, Nice, and Toulouse, and appointed staff for the same mission in Clermont-Ferrand, Grenoble and Limoges.

In 1995, within a contract for the development of the teaching of Occitan drawn up between the *académie* of Toulouse and the Region of Midi-Pyrénées, a post was

created in the Regional Centre for Pedagogical Documentation in Toulouse for someone to prepare text books for bilingual classes.

evaluation

In March 1996 MAFPEN organised in Bordeaux the fifth inter-academic training course in Occitan in the presence of the General Inspector. This made it possible to examine the different situations with regard to the teaching of Occitan in the *académies* and even in the districts, as well as the progress and the needs at all levels (regulations, pedagogy, staff).

On the pedagogical level a working plan has been set up to coordinate the preparatory work for the text books and the assessment of bilingual teaching. Most of the educational practice of bilingual education is based on earlier experiments in the Basque country and in Brittany. It was agreed that in future the National Institute for Pedagogical Research (I.N.R.P.) would be requested to deal with the research and the training of staff for this innovative aspect of education. It should be mentioned that also the IUFM's can carry out research. The IUFM of Montpellier focussed a research project on "Teaching the Region" in Spring 1997.

9 Prospects

The recent developments in the teaching in and of Occitan are without any doubt the fruit of the good will and efforts of various parties. It can not be denied that the Minister of Education has taken steps to facilitate the teaching of Occitan, although most initiatives stem from the Occitan language movement. Still, the teaching of Occitan gives no grounds for complacency: the position of the language is still fragile, as it depends heavily upon the goodwill of teachers and parents.

In various circles teacher training is considered a core area for future improvement, not only to improve language

knowledge, but also to heighten the motivation to teach it among future teachers.

In order to establish firmly the position of regional languages in education, a new law in France on the protection of regional languages in social, educational and cultural areas could be an essential step. Such law would surely help raise the status of the regional languages, which until now have received little consideration.

recommendation

It seems evident that full educational recognition of a language wil promote the choice of such a language by individuals. Thus, pre-service training in Occitan at the IUFM needs to be extended. As new trends show once again the advantages of bilingual education, introducing future teachers to successful models of this form of teaching merits a more favourable approach than it has had in the past.

It is also advisable to stress the importance of bilingualism in the perspective of future European exchanges, together with a pedagogical practice based upon new technologies.
It would also be advisable to enable children to rediscover the cultural content of their own language and thus help them understand their own background. This holds true especially in those surroundings where a regional language is spoken in conjunction with a majority language.

10 Summary statistics

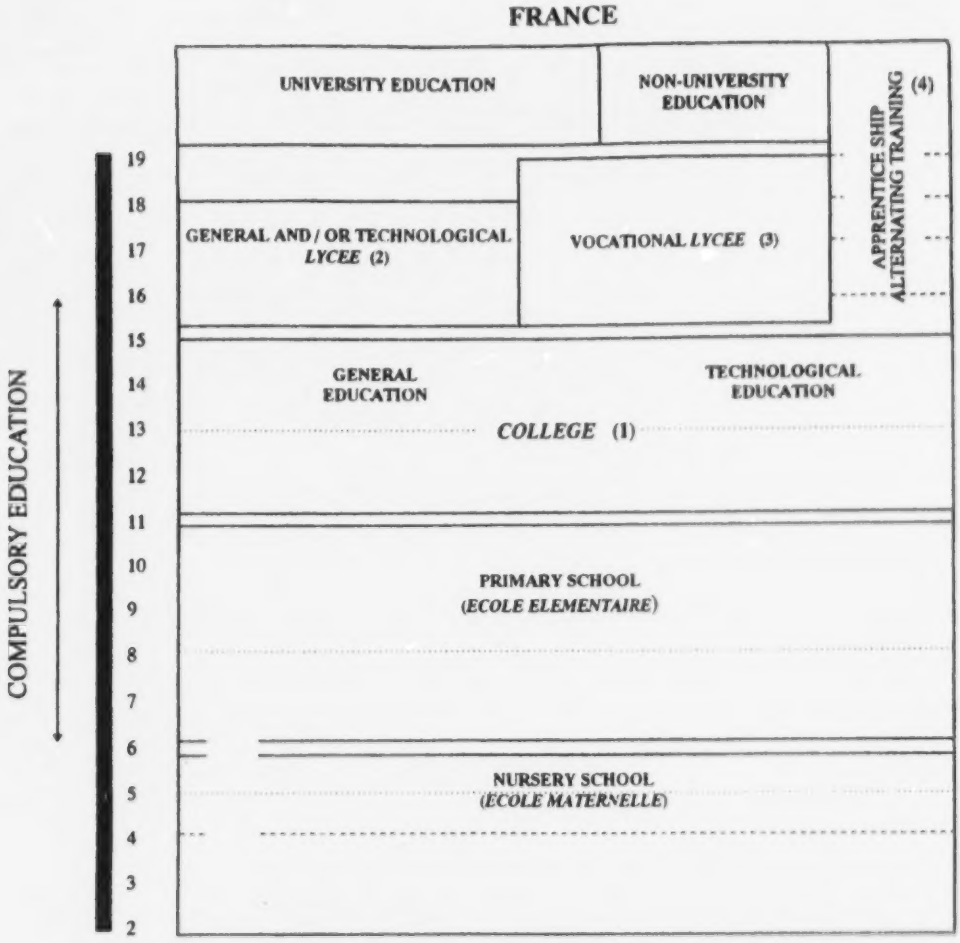
Teachers for Regional Languages & Culture	
Bordeaux	62
Clermont	2
Montpellier	73
Toulouse	140

Table 1

Type of Education		Number of schools		Enrolment
		total	offering Occitan	pupils following Occitan
Preschool	calandretas	16		650
	bilingual	14		365
Primary	calandretas	10		450
	bilingual	11		280
	Bordeaux			9000
	Clermont			1600
	Montpellier			8200
	Toulouse			297796
Lower secondary	Bordeaux	243	36	1308
	Clermont	23	5	100
	Montpellier	152	74	2174
	Toulouse	223	83	3368
Upper secondary	Bordeaux	68	29	525
	Clermont	4	3	73
	Montpellier	30	21	588
	Toulouse	63	49	1930

Table 2: Number of schools and enrolment in four (out of eight) *académies* in Occitan regions in the South of France. Note that the statistics are not complete. Year 1995.

Educational system in France, from: *Structures of the Education*



1.The *Collège* provides general education at lower secondary level leading to a national certificate (*Brevet*). The orientation cycle includes both general and technological education.

2.The general and/or technological *Lycée* provides upper secondary education leading to higher education or employment. Pupils prepare for the general *Baccalauréat*, which usually leads to higher education, the technological *Baccalauréat* (*B.Tn*), which leads either to employment or to higher education, or the technical certificate (*brevet de technicien, BT*), which generally leads to employment. The preparatory classes for the *grandes écoles* (*classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles, CPGA*) and the higher technical sections (*sections de techniciens supérieurs, STS*) in *Lycées* provide post-*Baccalauréat* training.

3.The vocational *Lycée* is an institution of secondary education providing young people with general technological and vocational training. It leads after two years to the vocational aptitude certificate (*certificat d'aptitude professionnelle, CAP*) or the vocational studies certificate (*brevet d'études professionnelles, BEP*), and, after two additional years, to the vocational *Baccalauréat*.

4.These courses can be entered between the age of 16 and 25. Apprenticeship training lasts two years. Alternating training: qualification contracts last six months minimum, 24 months maximum; adaptation contracts last six months minimum; and guidance contracts last from three to six months.

..... = division in the level / type of education

- - - - - = alternative beginning or end of level / type of education

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Endnotes

1 Source: European charter for regional or minority languages. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. November 1992. European Treaty Series/Série des traités européens 148

2 This document called "*Structures of the education and initial training systems in the European Union*" has been prepared jointly by EURYDICE and CEDEFOP.
Address: EURYDICE European Unit, Rue d'Arlon 15, 1050 Brussels, Belgium.
Tel.: +32-2-238 3011; Fax. +32-2-230 6562. Website: (also in French)
http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/euryen.html

3 We should note the special situation of the Val d'Aran in Spain where, since "the Law of Aran" of June 16th 1990, the Conseil General of the Val d'Aran has been fully competent as concerns the teaching of Aranese, defined as the local form of Occitan, and where, since March 9th 1992, Occitan has become officially a vehicular and working language, in addition to Spanish and Catalan. It also regards around 40,000 inhabitants of 10 valleys in South-Western Piedmont (Cuneo/Coni) in Italy, and 6,000 people of the Val d'Aran in Spain.

4 In 1904, Frédéric Mistral was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature for his works written in Provençal.

5 This decrease among young people in using Occitan as a social language varies from one region to the other, but exact statistics are not available.

6 In both Montpellier and Pau 1000 people participated in the survey

7 Source: Structures of the education and initial training systems in the European Union. In this document details about the educational system in France are not mentioned. Entry on France in the International Encyclopedia of Education (2nd ed.) of Húsen & Postlethwaite, 1994.

8 In France about 17% of the school-going population attends private schools (Source: Húsen & Postlethwaite, 1994)

9 In this directive (February 22nd 1995) the weekly hourly periods of each language are defined.

10 A list of these organisations and there addresses is enclosed in this regional dossier.

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Directive 95-086 of April the 7th, 1995: (Bayrou)

Addresses

pedagogical publications

Le Minot (Aquo d'Aqui)
Inspection Départementale
Boulevard a. Mazet
13140 Miramas

Lo Senhal (A.D.O.C.)
23, rue de la Chicanette
B.P. 80
48000 Mende
tel.: +33-4-66491203
e-mail: andre-clement@hol.fr

La Setmana
B.P. 86
64230 Lescar

Lenga e païs d'Oc - C.R.D.P.
Allée de la Citadelle
34064 Montpellier Cedex 2
tel.: +33-4-67607466
fax: +33-4-67606119

La letra des ensenhaires d'occitan
Centre Régional d'Etudes Occitanes (C.R.E.O.)
Les Dames
31320 Aureville
France

publishers

Institut d'Estudis Occitans (I.D.E.C.O.)
Boîte Postale 6
81700 Pueglaurenç/Puylaurens
France
tel.: +33-5-63752226
fax: +33-5-63752214
e-mail: ieoideco@minitel.net
internet: http://www.sv.cict.fr/oc/ieo/

Escola Occitana d'Estiu (E.O.E.)
Centre Culturel Occitan de Picapol
Hautefage la Tour
46340 Laroque Timbaut
France
tel.: +33-5-53412935

C.R.D.P. de Montpellier
(Cf. above at Lenga e Païs d'Oc)

Pedag'oc
(Edicions REVOLUM)
28, Grande Rue St. Nicolas
31300 Toulouse

cultural centres and associations

Institut d'Estudis Occitans (I.E.O.)
1, rue Jacques Darré
31300 Toulouse
tel.: +33-5-61427855
internet: http://www-sv.cict.fr/oc/ieo

Escola Occitana d'Estiu (E.O.E)
Centre Culturel de Piquepoul
(Cf. address above)

Fédération pour l'Enseignement de la Langue et de la Culture d'Oc (F.E.L.C.O.)
IUFM
2, Place Marcel Godechot
34092 Montpellier Cedex 2
France
tel.: +33-4-67618325
fax: +33-4-67618310

C.R.D.P. Montpellier
(Cf. address above)

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